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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS



MERCHANDIZING YOUR JOB TALENTS

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
College of Agriculture
Cooperative Extension Service
Circular 1253



You want a job. To find that job, you need to carry out a well-planned job search. You have a special product to sell — YOU! You are marketing your knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience. Whether you have been out of the labor force for a number of years or are looking for a new position after twenty years' experience, some of the techniques in this issue may help you. Remember, searching for the job of your choice is a job in itself. It takes planning, time, thought, and lots of work.

What's the Right Job for You?

After you have spent time getting to know yourself — your strengths, career values, interests, and abilities — you are ready to look at your job options. A single parent has different demands on his or her time than a parent with a spouse to share the child-rearing and homemaking responsibilities. You may be interested in an entry level job that lets you explore a whole new career, or you may need the highest paying job with the potential for rapid advancement. Other considerations may be time for your family, flexibility in work hours, future earnings potential, child-care facilities, job security, or retirement benefits.

Your job hunting will be influenced by the kind of job you are seeking. But no matter what job you are considering, you will need to begin making job contacts. And for that, you need a resume.

Ten Seconds to Make an Impression

If a resume doesn't impress an employer in ten seconds, chances are it never will. That's right, the average employer looks through 100 resumes a day, and so they are skimmed. To get an employer's attention, the resume's appearance and format are critical. Keep in mind that if the employer doesn't need to fill a position, it doesn't matter how qualified you are.

Limit your resume to no more than one or two pages. The resume should be easy to read, concise, and well organized. A good resume is a summary of personal, educational, and professional qualifications. Because this summary is often your "introduction," it should highlight your best skills and qualifications.

Writing a resume. A resume is a "fact sheet" that describes your skills, potential, experience, and personality traits that are relevant to the position you are applying for. The resume is a selling tool. It helps convince a potential employer that you are the person he or she has been looking for. Remember, you may need different resumes for different jobs you are applying for. For a resume to be most effective, it must be tailor-made for the job you want. Your resume will help you get your foot in the employer's door. It is your introduction and can help you get an interview.

Writing a resume may be new to you. You may already be thinking that you won't be able to do it. Don't panic! Whatever you are feeling, remember that finding a job is a process, and resume writing is just one step in the process.

There are two basic types of resumes — functional and chronological. A functional resume is the more useful and is preferred for the person who either has never worked outside the home or has not worked in a paid position for many years.

"The best jobs go to those who know how to get them."

The functional resume describes the skills you have that are directly related to the job and how you have used those skills in the past. Emphasis is on your abilities and potential, so little or no attention is given to exact dates, the people you worked for, or how you were employed.

The chronological resume format is a more traditional approach to resume writing. This resume contains the same type of information that you would provide on an application form. Emphasis is given to dates of employment, whom you worked for, and a brief description of what you did in the job.

Choose the format that will allow you to best highlight your worth to an employer. You may wish to use some features from both formats.

Edit your resume to make it easy to read, brief, and complete. Include only the most important information. Perfect spelling, grammar, and punctuation are essential.

Show the resume to friends or others who may be able to review it or react to it. Remember — this is no time to be modest. You are advertising your strengths and abilities. Don't be reluctant to give yourself credit for your outstanding qualities.

Type the final copy. You may want to have several copies printed. A neat overall appearance of the resume is important.

Your resume should be as appealing and unique as you are. There is nothing to prevent you from adapting, changing, deleting, or embellishing upon the information that you see in resume examples. Use your own creative abilities.

On pages 4 and 5 are examples of a functional and a chronological resume. The example of a functional resume is for an individual who has never held a salaried job, but who has many skills gained from life experience. No personal information that might be interpreted negatively is given.

Load your resume with action verbs. Employers want to know how much responsibility you have assumed in jobs or other experiences. "Was responsible for" does not explain enough. Be more specific, such as:

- Designed new filing system for church.
- Taught sewing to ten high school students.

- Initiated and wrote a federal grant application for community theater. Grant was funded for \$7,000.

Here are a few action words to get you started:

administered	operated
analyzed	organized
budgeted	publicized
calculated	recruited
conducted	scheduled
directed	served
initiated	specialized in
managed	supervised

Things to omit. Notice what is not included in the sample resumes. Do not include anything personal and unrelated to the job such as age, marital status, height, weight, or irrelevant hobbies. These facts can create reasons for your resume to be screened out, possibly by just one person's bias.

Looking Ahead to 1995

Fastest growing occupations:
Computer service technicians
Legal assistants
Computer systems analysts
Computer programmers
Computer operators
Office machine repairers
Physical therapy assistants
Electrical engineers
Civil engineering technicians
Electronic data processing equipment operators

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.





"A resume is no good unless it emphasizes the things that pertain to the job you're applying for. I have 12 versions."

Functional Resume



Ann Marie Thomas
1825 North James Street
Woodbine, Illinois 61086
858-3304 (days) or 867-0381 (evenings)

POSITION DESIRED

Child-Care Worker

QUALIFICATIONS

Well-developed skills for working with children, including effective disciplining of children and creative teaching of educational concepts.

Experienced in working with children in a classroom setting, by acting as a Parent-Monitor (four years) and Sunday School teacher for seven-year-olds (eight years).

Good understanding of how to plan a variety of activities, and meet the emotional needs of young children.

Successfully raised two children.

Actively concerned with issues about children and family relationships, especially those issues dealing with child care for children in single-parent families.

SPECIAL SKILLS

Artistic ability (printmaking, wood carving).

EDUCATION

Attended high school through the eleventh grade. Currently completing my education via the GED program.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Organized neighborhood child-care cooperative.

REFERENCES

Mrs. Ruth W. Williams, Teacher
Stockton Grade School
305 West Jones Street
Stockton, Illinois 61085
Phone: 858-3304

Rev. Peter Smith
First Methodist Church
210 Bench Street
Galena, Illinois 61015
Phone: 816-7321



"I looked at other friends' resumes and I found things I liked. And I think the big thing is to push your experience. If you don't have experience, then write about what you've done. You can make babysitting into a three sentence paragraph such as total care of a child, emotionally, physically and psychologically. It's all in the way you word it."

Chronological Resume

Joyce Kline
45 West Stephenson
Freeport, Illinois 61032
566-3901 or 974-3211
S.S. No. 367-15-6451

POSITION DESIRED

Bus Driver

WORK HISTORY

ILL-A-JOINT, Inc.
4515 Spruce Street
Warren, Illinois (1978-1984)
Position: Dispatcher

County Line School
754 County Road
Lena, Illinois 65728 (1971-1978)
Position: Bus Driver

Elite Stationers
Danville, Illinois (1966-1968)
Position: Delivery Van Driver

EDUCATION

High School Graduate
Central High School, Moline, Illinois
Date of Graduation: June, 1959

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Considerable experience driving cross-country.
Logged nearly 60,000 miles while working as bus/delivery van driver.
Special Driver Safety Citation Award received 1971-1978.

REFERENCES

Mr. F. G. Timms
Raymor Seeds
Pine Street
Lena, Illinois 61701
Phone: 851-3011

Dr. Paul Stone, Supt.
County Line School
745 County Road
Lena, Illinois 65728
Phone: 851-1234

17.7 Million Moms Working Outside the Home

Fifty-five percent of the nation's estimated 32.2 million women with children eighteen years old and younger held jobs outside the home in 1984 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Among divorced women, 74.3 percent are in the labor force.

"When I go into an interview, I try to be very confident about myself."

The Next Move — The Interview

If you are well prepared, you will find that most interviews are pleasant and interesting discussions. Because so few people do prepare adequately, this gives you the opportunity to enter the interview knowing that you are already well ahead of others.

Keep in mind that many employers don't know how to conduct interviews in order to match your abilities to their needs. And most are eager to fill the job so that they can get on with their regular work. Your challenge is to help them see how you and your abilities are what they are looking for in an employee.

To help you meet this challenge there are some key considerations in a successful interview:

- Wear appropriate clothing.
- Be well groomed.
- Meet the interviewer with a firm handshake.
- Show a sense of humor and a readiness to smile.
- Be genuinely interested in the employer's business and alert to what the interviewer is saying.
- Show pride in your previous experiences.
- Display sound ideas.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the employer's needs and a desire to serve them.

Things you should stress during a job interview:

- Your qualifications for the job.
- Your stability and how your past experiences are relevant to the job opening.
- The contribution you can make to the organization.
- Your flexibility, readiness to learn, and ability to get along with others.

Things not to do:

- Do not arrive late.
- Do not be a know-it-all or an "I can do anything" person.
- Do not hedge in answering questions.
- Do not say you have skills that you know you do not have or cannot deliver.

Prepare for the interview. Anticipating an interviewer's questions and thinking through your answers beforehand can increase your chances for making a favorable impression. Here are some questions interviewers often ask. Be ready for them.

- How would you describe yourself?
- What is your greatest weakness? What is your greatest strength?
- Which is more important to you — the money or the type of job?
- What do you really want to do in life?
- What have you done that shows initiative?
- Why should I hire you?
- What do you know about our business? What can you do for us?
- What makes you think you are qualified to work for us?
- Why did you decide to seek a position with us?



After the interview. After each job interview, it is a good idea to make some notes before you forget what was discussed. Try using the following outline.

Looking at Your Interview

Interviewed at _____

Date _____

Address _____ Phone number _____

Person I talked with _____

Amount of salary discussed _____

Fringe benefits _____

Working atmosphere pluses _____

and drawbacks _____

Things I found out about the job _____

Things I forgot to check into: salary, benefits, hours, vacations, etc. _____

Follow-up needed: Letter _____

Phone call _____

Date of follow-up _____

Results _____

Things I feel impressed the interviewer _____

To improve my next interview, I should _____



For Further Reading

- Azrin, N. H., and Besalel, V. B. *Finding a Job*.
Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1982. (Paperback.)
- Catalyst. *Making the Most of Your First Job*.
New York: Ballantine Books, 1981. (Paperback.)
- Parker, Y. *The Damn Good Resume Guide*.
Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1983. (Paperback.)
- Weinstein, B. *Resumes for Hard Times*. New
York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1982.



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